

He doesn't like EPA in his water either

By LINDA L. MULLEN

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ELKHART — E.N. Miller isn't in too big of a hurry to get his TCE-contaminated water cleaned up.

He says it isn't his fault that his well water is contaminated. And for another thing, he doesn't like being told what to do.

The Environmental Protection Agency called Miller last week and told him the federal government will pay for his hookup to city water, but he's going to have to pay for the pipes to go across his yard. ✕

By his way of thinking, that means he's going to have to pay \$320 for something he doesn't want.

Miller was told in mid-October that his well water at 2205 17th St. is contaminated. It contains a TCE count of 1,400 parts per billion, compared with the "safe level" of 5.

TCE — trichloroethylene — is a chemical that has caused cancer in laboratory tests.

The water wasn't always contaminated, Miller said. In fact, he didn't begin noticing the funny taste in the water until earlier this year.

The contamination is coming from ground-water pollution, the Elkhart County Health Department said, so Miller is entitled to financial assistance from the EPA's Superfund. Superfund is a federal program to solve the nation's most serious water-pollution problems.

Miller, age 83, was told he might get cancer from his water, so he quit drinking it and started looking for his own solution to the problem. He picked up a Sears catalog and found a filter that removes

TCE from drinking water.

The advertisement said it was 99 percent effective. With the cost of replacement cartridges included, the cost was about \$150.

But if Miller installs those filters, there's nothing the EPA can do to help him.

"Well, I never asked them to do anything anyway," he said.

Miller told EPA officials he would think about their plan, which would cost him \$320, and weigh it against his idea, which would cost \$150, and let them know by Dec. 31 what he's going to do.

If he waits until after the first of the year, EPA officials told him, they will not be held responsible.

But Miller still is bothered by the fact that the EPA wants \$320. ✕

"I didn't pollute the damn water," he said. "Let the factories pay for it (the cleanup costs). Go after them."

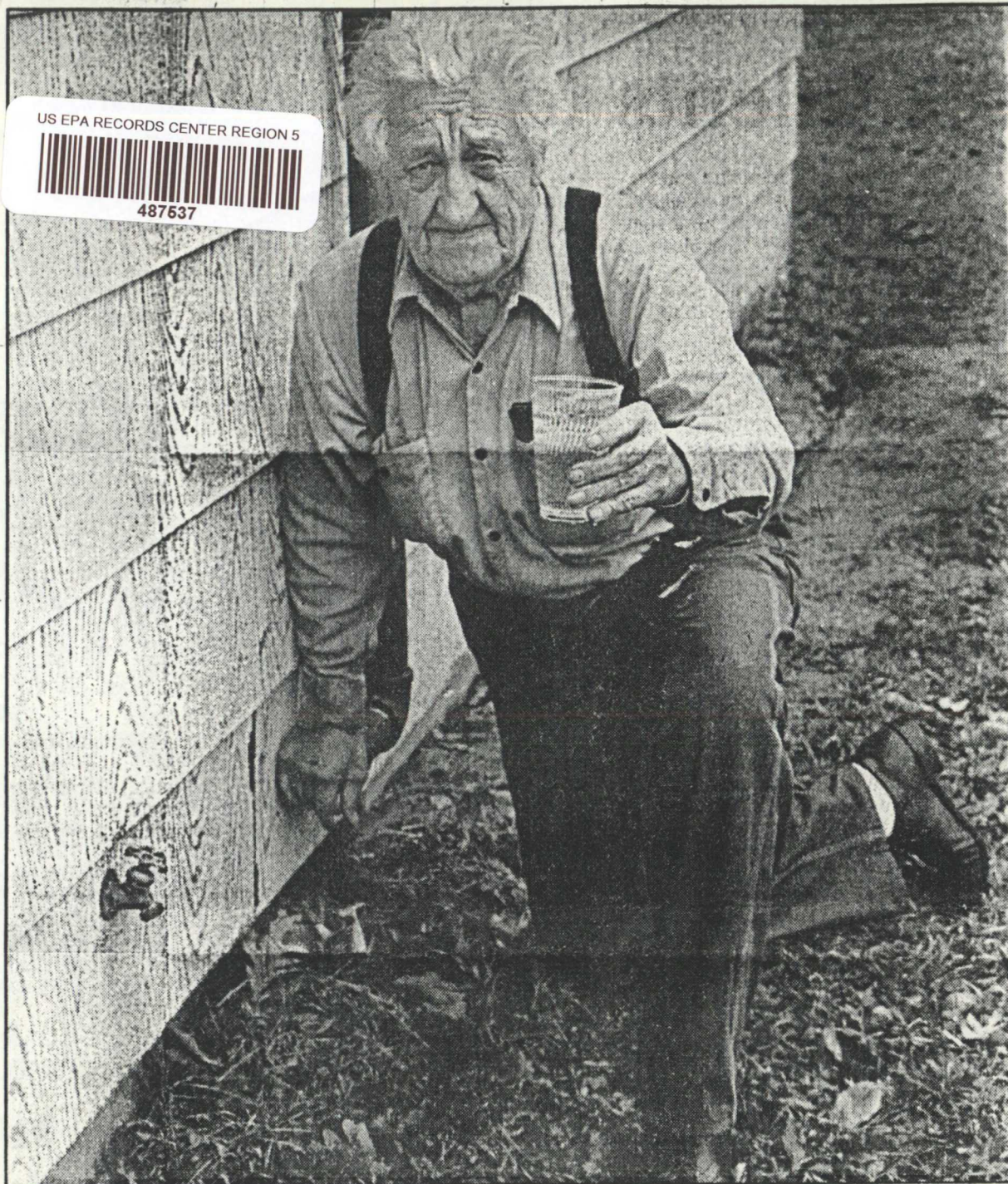
He thought about moving to the country, where the water is cleaner, but he decided after all that he doesn't want to live in the country. "I was born on a farm, but I'm bred and city broke," he laughed.

He's lived in his house on 17th Street for 40 years. Because of growth in the city, his home now is in the center of a small industrial park. His house faces Atlas Chem-Milling, a division of Atlas Steel Rule Die Inc., and has its back to GlassMaster, a company that works with fiberglass.

"After 40 years on my own, they tell me I have to hook up to city lines," he said. "Then I have to pay a water bill every month. I don't know about that."

"They told me the sooner I hook up to city water, the better," Miller said.

"But I told them to wait. I'd let them know at the end of the month. I ain't in no hurry."



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E.N. Miller offers a glass of contaminated water from an outdoor faucet at his Elkhart home.